

INCIDENT REPORT



BAY AREA AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT DIVISION

M.T. Valiant- Anchorage 9 San Francisco INCIDENT OF OCTOBER 14, 2003

On the evening of Tuesday October 14, 2003, Oakland and Alameda Fire Departments began receiving dozens of calls from residents complaining of strong natural gas odors. The Alameda Office of Emergency Services began handling the residents' calls and coordinating efforts to locate the source of the odor. In coordinating with the U.S. Coast Guard, the source of the odors was traced to a ship in the middle of the bay named the M.T. Valiant (Liberian registry). At approximately 4:00 P.M. the crew of the ship M.T. Valiant began cleaning residual crude oil and sludge out of the ship's ten (10) cargo tanks while moored at Anchorage 9 in San Francisco Bay, approximately one mile southeast of the Bay Bridge. The tanks were being cleaned in preparation for loads of other petroleum materials the ship was to pick up in Benicia and Martinez later in the week. The cleaning operations lasted until Wednesday evening at about 9:00 P.M. During this process, vapors from the ship's cargo tanks were purged and vented to the atmosphere until Thursday evening. The wind data show the prevailing winds during this period of time were from the west/southwest and are consistent with a scenario of carrying the vapors across the San Francisco Bay and into the cities of Alameda and Oakland.

The District received four odor complaints on October 14 between 5:00 P.M. and midnight that are related to this incident.

On Wednesday October 15, 2003, at approximately 2:30 P.M., District Inspection staff arrived at Anchorage 9 to investigate the operations aboard the M.T. Valiant and observed the following:

- Very strong oily odors were coming from the ship's cargo tanks.
- Two of the ship's cargo tanks were being vented directly to atmosphere.
- A liquid sample was obtained from the starboard Slop tank for evaluation.

On Thursday October 16, 2003, at approximately 9:30 A.M., District Inspection Staff returned to the ship for a follow-up investigation and observed the following:

- Two more of the cargo tanks were being vented to atmosphere.
- An air sample was obtained from the venting point of the #5 center tank for evaluation.

The District staff is continuing the investigation into these operations and evaluating whether any air quality regulations have been violated.